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**“The Retreat from
Pulaski to Nashville.”**

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"The Retreat from
Pulaski to Nashville."

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE OHIO COMMANDERY

OF THE

MILITARY ORDER

OF THE

Loyal Legion of the United States

DECEMBER 1, 1886.

BY COMPANION

LEVI T. SCOFIELD,

Late Captain U. S. Volunteers.

CINCINNATI:

H. C. SHERICK & CO.

1886.

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THE

Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville.

While Sherman's army was at Cherokee County, Ala., General Hood remained at a respectful distance near Florence on the Tennessee River. But when our great General started with the larger portion of his army for the Atlantic coast, Hood believed that the way was left open for him to lead his army where he pleased, and it would be an easy matter to sweep away anything that would oppose him in his triumphal march to Nashville, Louisville, and Cincinnati.

He little counted on the brains and opposing qualities of the two able Generals that were left behind to watch his movements—Thomas and Schofield. The two branches of Sherman's army parted at Gaylesville, Sherman accompanying the larger portion to the sea coast, and sending the 23d and 4th Army Corps to Resaca and Dalton, where they took trains and were transported by rail to Nashville and then to Pulaski. This campaign was commenced in the beginning of November, 1864. During the second week of November we reached Pulaski. This movement was ordered by Thomas, and was under the direct command of Schofield. The object was to watch, oppose, and retard Hood, while Thomas was scraping together detachments of troops in the rear; also to remount, equip, and place his cavalry on a better footing to cope with the same branch of Hood's army. We were at the same time waiting for A. J. Smith's corps to arrive from the West, and this command, together with new organizations, would swell our force to an equal or larger number than Hood's, and enable us to



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face him, or even overcome him. Hood, however, was not inclined to wait for our preparations, and was ordered by Beauregard, who was his superior in command, to push forward from Florence, which he did on the 20th of November, expecting to flank Schofield at Lawrenceburg and cut off his retreat by rail from Pulaski. Capron's, Croxton's, and Hatch's cavalry were covering his front and on the lookout, and sent word to Schofield, who immediately prepared to fall back to Columbia, as he was not occupying a strategic point. We left our camps and started on the Columbia Pike on the 22d, and marched to Lynnville, where we were joined by Wagner's Division, 4th Corps. On the afternoon of the 23d we marched to the junction of the Mt. Pleasant and Shelbyville roads. Before daylight of the 24th we were ordered to march to Columbia, and arrived there just after sunrise. We were met, south of the town, by an officer of Ruger's staff, who informed us that Capron's cavalry were pouring into the town, and the Confederates were not far behind them. General Cox took in the situation at once, and with the instinct of an engineer, knowing the lay of the ground, he decided not to enter the town, but the head of the column then coming up was double-quickened by a diagonal short cut around the town, and arrived on the Mt. Pleasant Pike just in the nick of time to meet the tail end of Capron's fagged out cavalymen, closely pursued by Forrest's exultant troopers. A captain on a splendid black charger was in the advance, shooting our men in the back of their heads with his revolver. He was dropped from his saddle by the first infantry man that crossed the road. The plucky 100th Ohio was, in one short minute, deployed as skirmishers and advanced rapidly to meet them ; but, as usual when cavalry meet an infantry line, they stopped. General Cox's Division was soon in position, and before noon General Stanley, with the 4th Corps, approached Columbia by a parallel road, and with the addition of Strickland's Brigade, Ruger's Division 23d Corps, and reinforcements of cavalymen, who met us here, we were in better shape, as to

numbers, than we were at Pulaski. Our stay at first in this position was rather monotonous, with nothing but cavalry in our front, and an occasional skirmish to liven us up. When Hood's head of column arrived, we had a little more excitement with artillery practice; but they evidently did not like the looks of our position, for they made no demonstrations leading to an assault, but kept our cavalry on the flanks uneasy, as though they contemplated flanking us out of our position.

Schofield was anxious to preserve the railroad and wagon road bridges across Duck River, which he could only do by remaining on the town side; but he knew, too, that the importance would matter little if Hood should cross the river and get between him and Nashville; so, at the end of two days, after dark, Cox's Division was crossed over to the north side of the river, and works thrown up for the batteries to protect the bridge crossings. Two days later the balance of our troops were brought over, and to prevent the enemy using the bridges they were destroyed; but that did not prevent some of the venturesome crossing right in our teeth, and our pickets had considerable trouble from the enemy's skirmishers. Their annoyance was so great that General Cox determined to drive them into the river, and sent word to his inspecting officer that the troops should charge them with the bayonet, and demonstrate right there whether the iron candlesticks they were carrying around with them could be turned to any other use as implements of war, or not. The attempt failed, because the men were too well covered by the skirmishers on the opposite bank.

On the morning of the 29th we learned that Hood was crossing some of his troops a few miles above Columbia. General Stanley moved in the forenoon with a part of the 4th Corps to guard the wagon trains then on the way to Spring Hill, and reached that place at noon. They were just in time, and Wagner's Division deployed at double-quick, Bradley on the right, Lane next, and Opdycke on the left, and pushed forward through the eastern suburbs of

the town against Forrest's cavalry, which command had been repulsed by Wilson at Mt. Carmel, five miles east of the Franklin Pike, and had turned over to Spring Hill by the Murfreesboro road to obstruct our trains. They were driven back to the woods by our infantry, and moved under cover to Thompson's Station, two or three miles toward Franklin, and a small body of them reached the pike between Spring Hill and Columbia, but were easily driven back by the wagon guard and artillery.

Colonel Lyman Bridges, Chief of Artillery of the 4th Corps, had charge of and posted the batteries on the left of the pike, and Major W. F. Goodspeed, Assistant Chief of Artillery, had charge of the batteries on the right which were handled so admirably against the assaulting lines of Cheatham's corps. There was some light skirmishing until the middle of the afternoon, when the head of Hood's column arrived, with Cheatham's corps of nine brigades in the lead. Hood was aware that Schofield was still at Columbia, with a portion of his command, and he ordered Cheatham to march in line against anything he should meet, and drive them across the pike. Cheatham did push forward, and struck the right of our line, forcing Bradley's Brigade back in confusion almost to the pike, Bradley being wounded in the assault. The loss was about 250 men. The other two brigades were not much engaged. This attack was followed up vigorously until they struck a slight line of fortifications, occupied by a single battery and a small regiment of infantry. The battery was commanded by the gallant Aleck Marshall, and the regiment by Colonel Harry Pickands, as plucky a fellow as ever had command of men; it was what was left of the 103d Ohio. They had been so cut up and reduced in numbers during the Atlanta campaign that they were detailed as General Schofield's Headquarters Guard, and were the first troops to reach Spring Hill, arriving there with the train between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning. General Fullerton, of Stanley's staff, saw them there when he arrived, and ordered them in

line to support the battery. As Stanley's report does not mention their presence even, it would seem proper to here note the part they took in the engagement. Bradley's men, as they fell back, rushed by them on either side, but they remained to support the battery. The officers had broken open boxes of ammunition and built a little parapet of cartridges in front of the men, from which they loaded; and a rapid, withering fire was poured into the advancing lines, doing terrible execution at this short range. The guns also were handled by Lieutenant Brills with wonderful rapidity. This furious driving storm of lead and iron had never been surpassed and rarely equaled by the same quality and number of arms. Cheatham's troops, encountering at this point such fierce opposition, and believing they had struck our main line of fortifications, halted, fell back, and commenced building a line of earthworks. Of course it is not probable, nor is it claimed that a small regiment of infantry, no matter with how much bravery they fought, could, under the same circumstances, hold in check a line that a well tried and splendid brigade had retreated from; but the situation here was such that the rebel General commanding was deceived as to the force confronted. At the same time, the little band is entitled to the credit of staying where it was put. If the men of the 103d had fallen back with the brigade, Cleburne would have crossed the pike, Brown would have followed him, we would have lost possession of the road, our army would have been cut in two, and the result might have been different.

The officers of the 103d tried to check the fleeing troops, and taunted their officers with the bad example they were showing their men. Captain Charlie Sargeant grabbed one officer who was tearing past him, who shouted "For God's sake, don't stop me! I'm a chaplain!" Additional troops coming up, pushed out some to feel Wagner's left flank, but made no further attempt to carry our position.

Darkness was now approaching, and Stewart's corps of four divisions arrived, and together with Cheatham's command went into bivouac for the night.

About this time General Cox's Division, which had been under a heavy artillery fire all day from Hood's guns stationed in and near Columbia, started for Spring Hill, leaving Wood and Kimball, who had been ordered to follow soon after. This night march was a very rapid one, and with the exception of a halt at Rutherford Creek to help out some artillery and teams that were there clogged, the distance to Spring Hill, about twelve miles, was made at the rate of four miles an hour. The rear guards were ordered positively to use the bayonet on fence-corner stragglers, and the orders were in several instances obeyed. When the General and staff reached Spring Hill, we were stopped on the road by Colonel George Northrup, of a Kentucky regiment of infantry. He cautioned us, hist—with his finger to his lips—not too speak above a whisper, and pointed to the camp fires within sight of the road. We could plainly see that soldiers standing there were Johnnies, and in the quiet of the night could hear their voices. An officer was left to repeat the caution to the advancing column.

A little further along on the road we found General Stanley at his headquarters, from whom we learned the whole situation. We waited for General Schofield to come back from Thompson's Station, where he had gone with one of Ruger's brigades, on a report that the enemy had reached the road there. Orders were again given at midnight to march immediately to Franklin, and General Cox's Division to lead the advance. Keeping up the long steady stride of four miles an hour, in the clear starlight, without meeting a soul on the road, we reached Franklin about three o'clock in the morning, awoke Colonel Carter, and made headquarters at his little brick cottage, the last house in the southern suburbs of the town, on the Columbia Pike.

While sitting out in front of the house, waiting for the head of column to arrive, everything was as still as the grave, and there was time to ponder on what the following day would bring forth. Very few, perhaps, anticipated the dreadful and bloody outcome, but rather looked for another

flank movement, as at Columbia. Presently the tramp of horses in the distance, and the rattle of tin cups against bayonets, told us that the troops were coming. They were marching by the left flank, and the 3d Division of the 23d Corps was led into position in that order on the east side of the pike; Stiles, commanding Henderson's Brigade, first, Casement next, and Reilly last, all facing to the south. General Cox was placed in command of the two Divisions, his own and Ruger's, and was instructed, as soon as the troops could get a short breathing spell, to strongly intrench themselves. It was considered necessary by General Schofield to make our stand on the south side of the town and river, so that the artillery and trains could mass in the streets of the village, while a wagon road bridge was being built, and planks put on the railroad bridge for their transfer across. General Schofield had, the previous day, sent an urgent request to Thomas to ship a pontoon bridge to Franklin for the Harpeth Crossing, and expected to find it there, but in this was disappointed. In this embarrassing situation there was nothing to do but construct the bridges with the meager facilities at hand; so, with his engineer battalion and details of troops, the work was performed, requiring his constant personal attention. He remained in this position during the engagement, so as to better superintend the crossing, and at the same time be near the railroad and telegraph station; while from Fort Granger, immediately above on the bluff, he had perfect command of the entire battle-field, and could direct the fire of the artillery stationed there with him. During the forenoon the troops kept pouring in, accompanied by artillery and wagon trains. Wood's Division of the 4th Corps took up position on the north bank of the Harpeth; Kimball's Division of the same corps was ordered to report to General Cox, and was by him placed in line on the right of the 23d Corps with its right flank resting on the Harpeth River. Two brigades of Wagner's Division 4th Corps (Lane's and Conrad's) were counter-marched, and placed something over a hundred rods in our

front, across the Columbia Pike, to watch the approach of the enemy, and to their right and front, on a little knoll, a section of Marshall's battery, supported by an infantry regiment. Opdycke's brigade of the same Division, which had been acting as rear guard from Spring Hill, passed through our line, and took up position in reserve behind Carter's Hill. The two regiments of Reilly's brigade that were left back in the skirmish line at Duck River, arrived and formed the second line behind the main works. The batteries of the 4th Corps were placed in our main line. They were ordered to report to General Cox, to take the place of the 23d Corps Artillery that had been posted on the north side of the river, as it was the first on the ground, and it was the intention, at that hour, to have all the artillery pass over as it arrived. By the middle of the afternoon our trains were nearly all across the river, and it was intended the troops should follow by dark, and accompany them during the night towards Nashville. But it seemed that General Hood had another programme marked out for us. When his sleepy army awoke at Spring Hill, and he found how nicely Schofield's command had passed him during the night, and an examination by daylight showed how easily he could have cut us in two at any time during the night, or headed us off entirely the previous afternoon, if he had known our exact situation, he was so chagrined that he cursed everybody, high and low, censured Cheatham, Cleburne, and the entire force that were present for not taking possession of the road; and made his whole army understand that they must make up for that blunder at the next opportunity, and that the time must be soon. So he pushed on in pursuit, their cavalry occasionally attacking our trains, and burning a wagon or two, until they came up with our rear guard, about noon, at Winstead Hills. Stewart's corps moved on to the right, towards Lewisburg Pike, turning Opdycke's flank, when he fell slowly back to the town. General Cheatham, with his corps, moved by the Columbia Pike, and formed in line north of Winstead Hills. From our position

the officers and horses could be plainly seen on this range of hills, a little more than two miles away, as though studying our position. Bate's Division marched over to Carter's Creek Pike and formed behind the Bostwick house. Stewart's corps moved over to the McGavock house, where the first skirmish firing was heard in the grove; it was by Reilly's men, who had gone there for logs to put on the earthworks. Firing now commenced over on the right, where Bate was forming, and the guns stationed on the pike poured in volley after volley with great rapidity. General Cox rode over to Stiles' Brigade, which was on higher ground, and, from the parapet, with his field glass watched the advancing lines until they ran over Wagner's men. He then mounted his horse and pushed for the center, where he arrived just in time to go forward with Opdycke when the break commenced. The suspense now was growing, for we knew there was to be a battle; but, oh! what a comfort to know that we, who in the Georgia campaign had to do most of the bucking against fortifications, were on the right side of the works, and in such a splendid position, with a gentle slope away from us, and not even a mullen stock to obstruct our fire for a good third of a mile. Our men felt that now was their time for wiping out many an old score. General Cox's engineer officer, the writer, was standing on the parapet of the 100th Ohio Regiment, the first one on the left of the Columbia Pike, urging the men to strengthen their works, and talking with General Wagner at this time. The General was reclining on his elbow, with a staff or crutch in his hand; he had fallen with his horse and was lame. They remarked that the musketry firing was becoming more rapid, also from the two guns in front. By and by a staff officer rode fast from one of the brigades and reported to Wagner, excitedly, "The enemy are forming in heavy columns, we can see them distinctly in the open timber and all along our front." Wagner said, firmly, "Stand there and fight them," and then, turning to the engineer officer, said, "And that stubbed, curly-headed Dutchman

will fight them, too," meaning one of his brigade commanders. "But, General," the officer said, "the orders are not to stand, except against cavalry and skirmishers, but to fall back behind the main line, if a general engagement is threatened." In a short time another officer rode in from the right in great haste, and told him the rebels were advancing in heavy force. He received the same order. The officer added, "But Hood's entire army is coming." Then Wagner struck the ground with his stick, and said, "Never mind, fight them." But even after this, they had time to come back in good order if they had been allowed to. Soon we heard the rebel yell and heavy firing. The artillery section had fixed prolonge and fired as they fell back to the advanced rifle pits, leaving their dead, but bringing in their wounded. The horses then brought the guns in on an easy trot. As they turned in around the short earthwork covering the gap across the pike, Aleck Clinton, one of the gunners, jumped off the limber, his face black with powder smoke, and said, with a grim smile, "Old Hell is let loose, and coming out there." In a short time we could see a commotion in our advanced brigades, but only an occasional dropping back, and soon we noticed the right of Stewart's command wrapped around Conrad's left, and then our men rose up and the break commenced. The right of Cheatham's corps came sweeping over the little rise of ground on which the low ramparts were built, in what appeared a solid human wave. And such a racket! Their shouting seemed to show such confidence as men would have who had been led to believe that the line they were assaulting was a weak one. It was a grand sight. Such as would make a lifelong impression on the mind of any man to see such a charge. As forerunners, well in advance, could be seen a line of jack rabbits, bounding along for a few leaps, and then they would stop, and look, and listen, but scamper off again as though convinced that this was the most impenetrable line of beaters-in that had ever given them chase; and quails by the thousand, in coveys here and

there, would rise and settle, and rise and turn again to the sunlight that called them back ; but no, they were frightened by the unusual turmoil, and back they came, and this repeated until finally they rose high in air and flew off to the gray sky-light of the north. The day had been bright and warm, the afternoon sun was setting on the distant hills, and in the hazy yellow light, and with their yellowish-brown uniforms, those in the front ranks seemed to be magnified in size ; one could almost imagine them to be phantoms, sweeping along in the air. On they came, and in the center their lines seemed to be many deep and unbroken, their red, tattered flags, as numerous as though every company bore them, flaring in the sun's rays, with conspicuous groups of general and staff officers in their midst, and a battery or two in splendid line charging along between the Divisions. In front of them were our men bent almost to the ground, with their heads turned to see if the enemy were gaining ground. It was every man for himself, and the devil take the last man over the works ; but here and there a brave fellow would hesitate as if he would like to face and fight them. On the right of Walthall's, and the left of Loring's Divisions, there were occasional breaks made by our infantry and the terrific volleys from the batteries on the opposite bank of the river ; also from Marshall's and Canby's Battery M, 4th Regular Artillery, who poured canister into the enemy that were swarming through the railroad cut ; but officers on horseback and afoot were at every gap, trying to close them up, so that on the left, Stewart's living sea, with raging surf, in wave following wave, broke and fell, and plunged onward o'er the sloping beach in our front. Still the great seething mass came rolling on to our center, and we could not open with artillery or infantry fire until our men were safely over. Oh, what a mistake the brave Wagner made ! Through the gap at last, and over the works they came, with Cleburne and Brown hot after them. Wagner by this time was on his horse, riding backwards, and facing the disorganized brigades, trying as hard as ever

man did, to rally them. With terrible oaths he called them cowards, and shook his broken stick at them ; but back they went to the town, and nothing could stop them. A sergeant, all made up of true metal, and with flashing eye, turned, and brought his gun down on the ground and said, "Hold on, boys, I don't go back another step." About twenty stopped with him, and went into our reserve line ; perhaps others stopped, but the great mass went through the town and crossed the river. Wagner was a great fighter ; it is said that bullets rattled out of his clothes for a month after the battle of Stone River, and his Division was as good as any other, but they had been pressed too close, and for some reason they thought the whole line would break. Their officers tried hard to check them, but their organization was broken in their scramble back from the front. It was not the fault of the men, but of their rash General. Poor Wagner is now dead ; his soul is in Heaven with the heroes, and let us draw over this one error the mantle of charity, and cherish the memory of his personal valor and dauntless courage on the hard fought battle-fields of the West.

If our men, in this part of the line, could have had time to fire two or three volleys, they would have regained the nerve that they lost during this awful suspense, and held the line without a waver. But Cheatham's whole corps was right on top of these few regiments before they could fire a shot, and some of them were forced back a short distance from the line on either side of the pike. Now was the great opportunity for the brave Colonels Opdycke and White, and the battery commander, Charley Scoville. Opdycke in command of Wagner's reserve brigade, and White in command of Reilly's second line, had been cautioned by General Cox, before riding over to Stiles' brigade, to look out for a break at this point, and when it did come they were ready. White's troops were made up of those daring earnest men from the mountains of East Tennessee, and Kentuckians from the northeastern part of the State, where they were so thoroughly loyal that they kept on shooting

rebels after the war was over. They did not wait for an order, but sprang over their low rifle pits like tigers, and with a shrill shout that was heard even above the rebel yell, and a heroism rarely equaled by men, went pell-mell into the mass of Confederates that had taken our line and did not know what to do with it. At the same time Charley Scoville cracked his blacksnake whip around the ears of his artillerymen, and drove them back to the guns. At it they went, with pickaxes and shovels, slashing all around them with the ferocity of demons. For a few minutes it was a fierce hand to hand combat, and it was right in those few minutes that the fate of one or the other of the armies was to be decided. For a little time it looked decidedly against us, but the desperate determination of our men, who were rallying to regain the line, had its effect, and a change began to show itself. Just at this time, Opdycke's Brigade was filing up the pike, left in front, and crossing diagonally, so as to uncover the buildings in Carter's yard, preparatory to charging the broken line in Strickland's front. They were pointed directly towards the place where White was engaged, and the Confederates took it for a heavy reinforcement of that part of the line. One by one they seemed shaken, feeling that they were to be overpowered; and, not wishing to place themselves in front of our line again, they threw down their arms and rushed to the rear, prisoners without a guard. When Opdycke's men faced to the front to charge the line, it was a more serious undertaking, as a larger number of men had broken over the works at this point and had obtained a firmer footing. But there was nothing too alarming for Opdycke's bravery, and he urged his men forward, placing himself where he could prevent stragglers from dropping out. He broke his revolver over men's heads, and then seized a gun, and whoever looked back within his reach was jobbed under the blouse. So he rushed them on and forced Brown's men from the outbuildings in Carter's yard. Strickland's men, rallying, counter-charged and joined him, and soon the ground was in our possession

again, and a second line established. General Cox remained mounted during the entire engagement, so as to carefully watch the whole line; and while the confusion was greatest, during the break, he was in their midst, displaying heroic bravery with hopeful look and waving sword, rallying the men. General Stanley was also there, showing great gallantry in encouraging the troops, but was wounded before he had been on the field ten minutes, and retired. Every charge ordered by Hood or any of his Generals after that first dreadful avalanche crumbled and broke, was foolhardy and reckless. After our line was fully re-established it was as steady as a granite wall; it was next to impossible to break it, and the enemy could only get over it as prisoners or by being killed in the attempt. The brave soldiers of the South felt it, too, for their after-charges were made against this furious storm with their heads bent, their hats pulled down, and their arms shielding from their sight the almost certain death that awaited them.

It was the writer's pleasure about a year since, while on a pilgrimage to the old battle-fields, to meet at Nashville the late General Cheatham, a very comfortable man to meet, with a make-up about equally divided between a well-to-do Southern farmer and a Prussian field-marshal. He greeted me most cordially, clasping me in his arms, and said: "Well, I heard you were here, and I've been looking all over for you; welcome to Tennessee. Any man who was in the battle of Franklin, no matter which side, is my friend." Then we had a good chat about old times. Referring to the two brigades out in front, "Ah," he said, "if it hadn't been for the mistake your side made there, you would have killed every man in our army, and God knows you killed enough of them." It is undoubtedly a fact that if the brigades had been called in at the right time, no part of our line would have been broken; and if all of the brigades had heeded the precaution to place headlogs on their works, and abatised their front, as Casement's did, the losses all along the line would have been as light as his, which was comparatively

insignificant. The officers of Casement's Brigade had their men take timbers from the cotton-gin house at the right of his line ; also cut trees from the grove, and carried the logs in to be placed on the top of the parapet. They rested on cross-ties hollowed out to receive them, leaving a three-inch space through which to fire.

Henderson's Brigade, on our extreme left, reached to the railroad track, and the works were built in the grounds of a large mansion which were bordered by a splendid osage-orange hedge. The line was located about fifty feet from this hedge, so that by cutting off the trees about four feet from the ground, it left an impenetrable obstruction, and at the same time open enough to fire through. The tops were scattered along in front of Casement's Brigade, making one of the most deceptive rows of abatis ever formed ; it was light, but an occasional stake held it in place. Walthall's men stopped when they reached it ; they were bewildered ; they couldn't get over it. They undertook to pull it away, but the sharp thorns pierced their hands, and they gave that up ; then right in the smoke of our guns they faced to the right, and filed through a gap made by a wild charging horse. All this time death was pouring out in sheets of flame and lead from the three-inch gap under the headlog. Two companies of the 65th Indiana had repeating rifles, and at that short range their execution must have been terrible.

Captain Baldwin's battery was stationed at this point, (15)* where the dead were piled up like snow-drifts in winter time, and here it was that the obstructions caused them to mass so many deep. The brave captain quickly took advantage of the situation, and to mow down this dense forest of humanity he loaded his guns to the muzzle with triple rounds of canister and dummies, or stockings filled with bullets. To use the captain's words, " At every discharge of my guns there were two sounds—first the explosion and then the bones." It was the same battery that was saved

* Corresponding numbers on map mark places described.

while marching out of Spring Hill by the coolness of one of the non-commissioned officers. Orders had been given to try to push through on the Franklin Pike, with instructions to abandon and destroy the guns, and try to save themselves and horses by breaking off into the fields on the left if attacked and hard pressed. They were halted by a rebel picket reserve, posted a short distance from the road, and the demand came in the darkness, "What battery is yours?" The commander was about to reply by unlimbering and turning his guns upon them, when the quick thought struck one of his corporals to say in a careless voice, "10th Alabama. What reegiment is yours?" "14th Mississippi," was the reply, and, apparently satisfied, settled down in the fence corner to sleep. They pushed on, and were not again molested until nearly morning, when they were attacked by Hood's cavalry. "Battery to the left flank; fire to the rear," was the Captain's prompt order. A half-dozen rounds of twelve-pound solid shot scattered the cavalry and saved the train of two army corps.

After dark, when it was safe to look over the works, it was a ghastly sight to see the dead. All along in front of Casement's men, the bodies reminded one of a rail fence toppled over and crossed many deep, or as if grim Death had built a new abatis of thickly tangled, short, heavy boughs. The ditch at Fort Saunders, Knoxville, just one year before, where the pick of Longstreet's army lay writhing as thick as the sea-lions on the Cliff Rocks near the Golden Gate, was bad enough to look at, but this was horrible. (1) Here is where General John Adams, leading his brigade, plunged through the abatis, cleared the ditch, and fell, with his horse across the crest and head log. He was gently handled, and placed on the ground inside the line. (2) This is where Jack Casement stood when he made his great speech. He sprang upon the works and turned to his troops, and, with a voice that every one could hear, said: "Men, do you see those damn rebel — — — (you all know the other three words) coming?" Then a

shout went up. "Well, I want you to stand here like rocks, and whip hell out of them." He then faced about and fired with his revolvers until they were empty, and jumped down with the men. The oratory may not have been as elegant as though studied for the occasion, but Cæsar to his Romans, nor Hannibal to his Carthagenians, ever made speeches thrilling their armies with more effect. It was what they understood and appreciated, and what they did afterward showed how well they heeded it. Not one man left the line, and Colonel Jack's example had something to do with it, you bet.

Just at this time, when the Confederate line was close to our works, and our men were concealed by the head logs, Jim Coughlan, a lieutenant of the 24th Kentucky, and General Cox's favorite aid, mounted his black horse, and, swinging his cavalry sabre over his head, charged back and forth along the whole line, cheering the men, and they all turned and gave him a cheer, for every man knew the gallant officer. He is the one who, on the white horse, led every charge (no matter whose command) across the field on the first day at Resaca; and all through the Atlanta campaign just such brilliant achievements on his part were noticed. It was not his dashing gallantry alone that made him such a favorite, but his military genius was of the highest order, and he was ever ready and anxious for duty, no matter what the weather or hour of night. If there was a spice of danger in it, he was better suited. Often, to avoid the dullness of camp life, he has begged to accompany me on topographical trips, when it was necessary to get information about the country ahead of us. He was always of the greatest assistance to me; but what risks he would take! It was my custom to approach a log hut or rail pile on the road cautiously, and expose as little of myself and horse as possible; but he would gallop on ahead in the middle of the road, singing or whistling with the greatest glee, and there had to be more than two rebel cavalry men standing in the road to keep him from charg-

ing. When he mounted his horse there at Franklin, the staff officers remarked to each other that he would surely be killed. It was late at night when we found him near the cotton-gin, where the hand-to-hand fighting was the fiercest. We lifted his cape from his pale face, and the stars looked down with us and wept.

The ride to Nashville was lonely to me, and I expected, after three days and two nights without sleep, when we spread our blankets on the floor of a small house outside the lines, that slumber would come quickly; but it was not so with me. The one who had shared the blankets with me for nearly a year was back at the Harpeth River, near the bridge head, with two feet of earth over him. This brave officer could only see one thing in martial glory, and that was to die in battle. His mind had been usually bright and happy, but gloomy spells were coming oftener as the dread disease of epilepsy increased and blighted his future. The nights were more frequent when, after his recovery from one of these spasms, I rolled him back in bed. There was no suffering, and he had no recollection in the morning of what had occurred; but once in a while a depressed feeling would prompt him to ask me if he had been unwell in the night, and I would satisfy him with a cheering word. We who knew him, when we saw him dead, believed that what he most dearly wished had come. Dying like a hero in one of the greatest battles of the world's history, before his mind became clouded and his system broken with bad health, was to him well worth praying for.

(3) During one of the charges that were made on this part of the line, an incident occurred at this battery which is worth relating. A slight boy of not more than fifteen years, with drum on his back, belonging to one of the Missouri regiments, foolishly attempted to force his way through one of the embrasures and thrust a fence rail into the mouth of a cannon, thinking, by his brave act, to stop the use of that gun. The gun was loaded at the time, was fired, and nothing was ever found of the drummer boy.

After our return from Nashville we again put up at the Carter house, where we found a young man nursing two companions. After breakfast he accompanied me out in front of the works, and pointed out where his regiment was buried. There were only three of his company left—two wounded and he alone unhurt. All the other companies suffered about the same. This little locust grove was a sight to see after the battle. The trees stood in a swampy swale, were from two to five inches in diameter, and very close together. They were in front of Opdycke's and Strickland's brigades, where more charges were made than on any other part of the line.

The firing here from both sides was terrific. Many of the largest trees were cut entirely off by bullets; all that were standing and all the stumps had each hundreds of bullet marks. Some were cut in shreds from bottom to top, and had the appearance, as much as anything, of broken hemp stocks. The slopes beyond our whole front resembled fields recently raked or harrowed. The Carter cottage at this point is the first place visited by Southern tourists. The dwelling, which is of brick, looks on the south end as if it had been marked with small-pox, and all the surrounding outbuildings have bullet marks in almost every square inch. Colonel Carter, with members of his family and neighbors, remained in the cellar during the whole of the fearful carnage. After the battle was over, and our men had left, the sisters took a lantern and went out in the rear of their house, hoping to be of some service to the wounded, and among the first was their own dear young brother, between the locust grove and the abatis, mortally wounded.

A large proportion of Cheatham's command were raised in this part of Tennessee, which accounts, to a great extent, without doubt, for their determination and bravery in trying to drive the invaders from their homes.

(4) This is the spot where General Pat Cleburne, the raw-boned Irish General from Arkansas, one of the greatest

fighters of the Confederate army, fell, with his iron-gray stallion, in a perfect cyclone of leaden hail. (5) General Gist was killed here, trying to hold Strickland's line, (6) and General Gordon was captured here near the Carter house; (7) Strahl was killed here, and (8) Carter mortally wounded. Brown, the division commander, was wounded. What record will compare with that? The division commander wounded, three of the brigade commanders killed, and the fourth captured. After the battle it was found that in some parts of Brown's line the dead were lying seven deep. And regimental and company officers were found supported, stiff and erect, against this barricade of dead, with their ghastly eyes wide open and their chins dropped down, as though looking in horror at the enemy that had done all this. (9) General Managault fell, severely wounded, in front of Moore's brigade. The loss of general officers in Stewart's corps was also large, but not so fatal. (10) General Cockerell, brigade commander in French's division, fell with two severe wounds. (11) General Quarles' command, of Walthall's division, suffered heavily; he himself was terribly wounded, his staff officers were all killed. The regimental field officers were all killed or wounded, so that the ranking officer of the brigade who led them off was only a captain. (12) General Scott, brigade commander in Loring's division, was wounded by a shell during the first charge. (13) General Granberry, of Cleburne's division, was killed on the pike in one of the desperate charges that were made to carry the center. This terrible loss of general officers is probably the greatest known in so short a battle. The loss of field and company officers was also surprisingly large. In some of the regiments of French's line there were no commissioned officers ready for duty, all being either killed, wounded, or captured. Many of the field and line officers gave themselves up and came over our lines, the most of them reporting to General Cox, and their stories were gloomy in the extreme. They said that the organization of the whole army was broken; that there

was hardly a company officer that knew where his men were. Some of them were in the battle before Atlanta on the 22d of July (the day McPherson was killed), and they thought that was a warm reception, but it was nothing compared to this; and they added, "What is the use in fighting any more? Haven't we had enough of it?"

(14) Right here is where Clarkie died. You of the 7th Ohio need no other name to understand whom I mean. But some of the others will know him better as Merwin Clark, who went out in the very beginning of the war as orderly sergeant of DeVillier's zouaves. He was the light, delicate boy of seventeen who was so brilliant in the bayonet exercise. He was the idol of the old 7th. He had the lovely character of a gentle girl and the lion heart of a hero combined. While captain in the 7th, he was promoted to the lieutenant-colonelcy of one of the new Ohio regiments, and was here with it in command. They were mostly young boys, and this was their first baptism in fire. When the solid lines of Brown's division rushed against them, they broke, and Colonel Clark seized the colors from the bearer, and rushed to the crest of the works; then turned to his men, and begged them to come back. But when they did at last come back they found poor Clarkie dead. He fell in the arms of Colonel Hollinger, of the 91st Indiana.

They captured some of our colors, but we got a great many more of theirs. My recollection now is that twenty odd stands were taken in front of Reilly's brigade, and that Lieutenant Brown, of Reilly's staff, captured eight of them, and carried them in person to Washington. About half-past ten o'clock at night a staff officer from headquarters rode over to our line, and told General Cox that General Schofield had received a dispatch from Thomas to immediately fall back on Nashville. General Cox then related to the staff officer the true condition of affairs in our front, and told him the reports we had received from the prisoners of the terribly cut-up condition of their whole

army, stating that, under the circumstances, it would be a mistake to retreat, and begging him go back to the General, and see if Thomas could not be prevailed upon to countermand his orders, to send on in the night fresh supplies of ammunition, and, if possible, A. J. Smith's command. He also sent his brother, Colonel Theodore Cox, with the message that he would answer for holding the lines with his head, and that we ought to assume the offensive from that point without delay, and reap the full benefit of the terrible defeat we had already inflicted upon Hood's army. General Schofield's reply was: "Tell General Cox he has won a glorious victory, and I have no doubt we could do as he suggests in the morning. But my orders from General Thomas are imperative, and we must move back to Nashville as soon as possible." Orders were then given to leave a strong skirmish line in the works in charge of Major Dow, Cox's inspector, and withdraw the troops to the other side of the river. About the time the movement was started, a house was set on fire in the town, the light of which would expose our withdrawal, and the fire had to be extinguished before we actually started. In due time, though, everything, including troops, trains, wounded, and prisoners, also the skirmish line, were safely crossed. The planks were removed from the bridges, and we again took up our retreat for Nashville.

A few years after the war it was my pleasure to ride in the cars from Columbus, Ohio, to Baltimore in company with General S. D. Lee, one of Hood's corps commanders in the Tennessee campaign. After introducing ourselves, he being from Mississippi and I from Ohio, our conversation soon drifted into war matters, and when he found that I had a pretty fair idea of the battle-field of Franklin we were warm friends, and in a friendly way we fought over that battle all the way to Baltimore. He told me what shape they were in that night. At twelve o'clock they were not aware of our retreat, and Hood had called a council of war. He first asked Stewart what he had to

report. That General replied that his army was all cut to pieces; that there was no organization left except with the artillery; that his losses had been very heavy; and that he would not be able to make an active move in the morning. Cheatham was then called upon, and his report was even more despondent and gloomy. Then, looking fiercely at Lee, Hood said: "Are you, too, going back on me?" He replied: "General, two of my divisions are badly cut up; but I have one division left that has not been engaged, and, if you say so, in the morning I will take them and charge with the bayonet." Hood saw, of course, that there was no use in attempting offensive operations again, but decided right there, at daylight they would mass their artillery and hurl shot and shell at our works and the town during the entire day, and make as bold a show as possible, preparatory to getting out of the bad situation where his foolhardy intrepidity had led him.

There is no doubt that when in the early morning he discovered that our troops were withdrawn, there never lived a man more surprised. In fact, instead of closely pursuing, he remained there, not knowing what to do, and it was not until the 3d of December that he moved up to Nashville and established his line. Even this timid movement was doubtless only intended to cover his retreat, to give him a chance to fix up the railroads and bridges, so as to get his transportation safely back across Duck River. How well he succeeded in this, we learned from the fact that not even a camp kettle was captured on the road from Nashville to Franklin after we passed through their camps south of the town.

After so many facts have been learned, there is no doubt but that General Cox was right when he first advised against the retreat from Franklin. Although the result at Nashville has been considered glorious, still, if the "Old Rock of Chickamauga" could for once have been turned, and sent the 9,000 of Smith's command who were at Nashville on the 30th of November by forced march to Franklin, and the

balance with Steedman's troops as soon as they could be forwarded, the result at Franklin would have been far more glorious. We would have had the enemy in the open field instead of behind intrenchments, and we would have found them that morning in the most thoroughly demoralized state that ever army was in. We would, to say the least, have saved the losses of the first day of the battle of Nashville, and would have captured very much more in the way of prisoners, artillery, and trains.

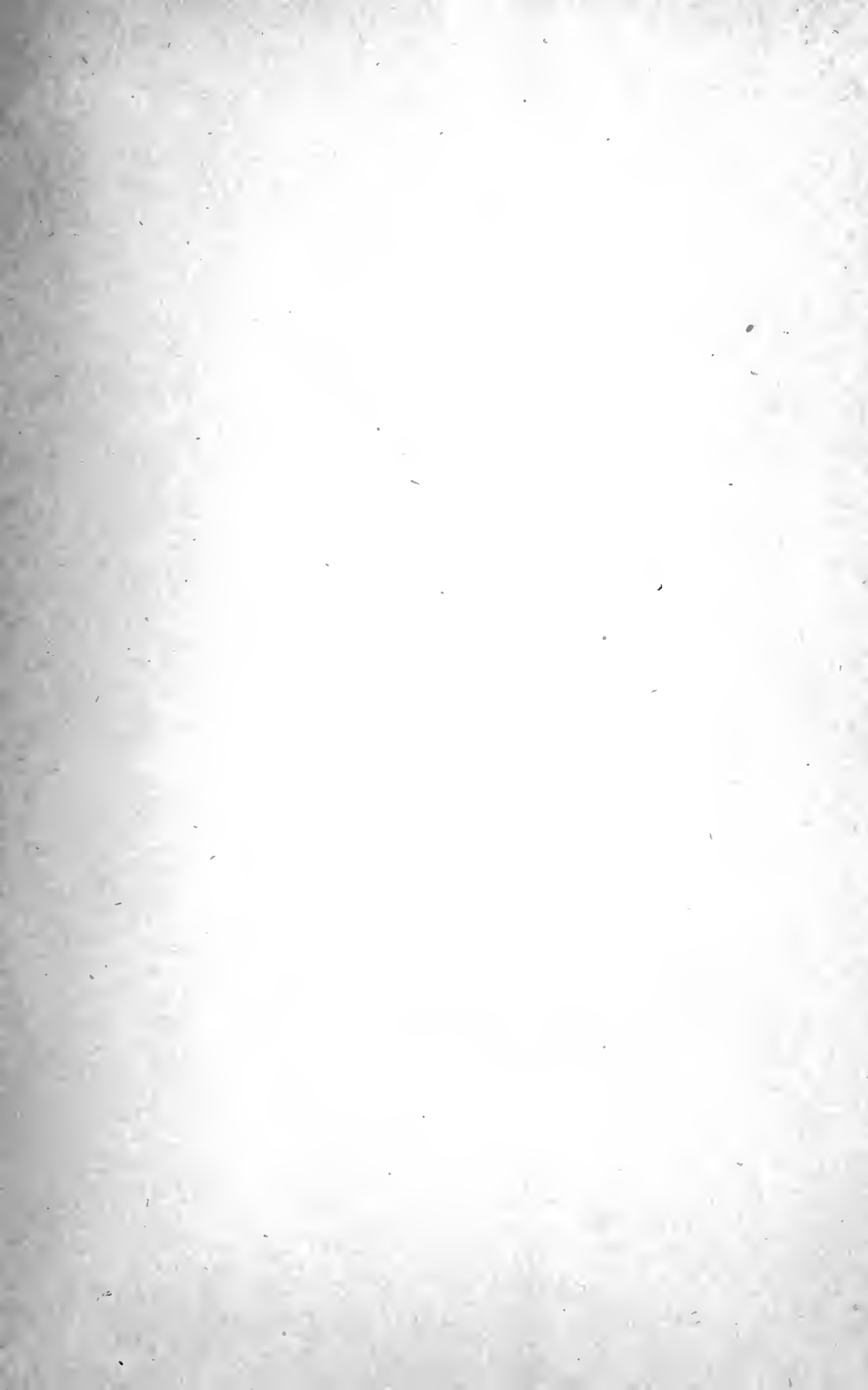
It would seem proper, perhaps, to round up this story of the retreat, by giving some account of what happened subsequently at Nashville. But my paper has already been drawn out too long, and as our first two weeks' besiegement was of a very monotonous character, beleagured by an army that we knew was crippled to death, almost, by defeat, it would hardly be interesting to you to hear a description of our chafing and uneasiness—particularly the last week, which would appear as slipshod to you as it did to us.

Nothing occurred until the last two days of our stay at Nashville, the 15th and 16th of December. The first day's manœuvres were confined to skirmishing and crowding back the advanced lines to their main works, which was successfully accomplished with very slight losses. General Schofield with his whip-lash corps, the 23d (this name was given us on the Atlanta campaign because we were always cracking around the flanks), which had been in reserve the morning of the first day, was instructed to move to the extreme right flank and connect with the right of Smith's command. We took the fields near the Harden Pike, and marched around by the Hillsborough Pike. Couch's Division of the 23d Corps drove the enemy from their advanced works late in the afternoon of the 15th, and took up position about one half mile in front of Smith. Cox's Division formed on the right and went into position before dusk right under Hood's fortifications on Shy's Hill. There a strong line of earthworks was thrown up at the edge of the corn field near the wood-skirted hills. Our skirmishers and the enemy's were

within one hundred yards of each other, shielding themselves behind trees. Our artillery was placed where we could plant every shell right in their embrasures.

The morning of the 16th was confined mostly to artillery and skirmish firing. About three o'clock in the afternoon, Wood pushed the 4th Corps forward, supported by Steedman on the left, to try the strength of the enemy's line; but was repulsed with great loss, Colonel Post, a brigade commander, being wounded. After noon, General Wilson's cavalry, supported by Stiles' Brigade of Cox's Division, moved around further on Hood's left flank; this movement was made easier by reason of the absence of Forrest's cavalry at Murfreesboro. This mistake of Hood's in allowing such a useful branch as the cavalry had been to him, to be absent on this day, contributed more to his easy defeat than any other single cause. It enabled Wilson to dismount his men and crowd way round in the rear of Chalmers, with Govan's Brigade in support. Here with their repeating rifles they kept up the liveliest firing ever heard of, which made Hood extremely anxious, not knowing but one-half our army was in his rear. In the meantime, General McArthur had discovered that Bate's position had been weakened in looking after the flank, and reported to Thomas that an attack on Shy's Hill would probably meet with success. Thomas fell in with the suggestion, and rode over with his staff to where Generals Schofield and Cox had made their headquarters. From this point every move could be seen. McArthur placed McMillan's Brigade in position for assault. The artillery from all our adjacent batteries opened with an intense fire on the hill, and our skirmish lines were pushed to the utmost. McMillan's double line went up the hill as steady as troops in review. Occasionally a rebel gun could be depressed enough to make a gap in the line, but it would immediately close up and press on. This was about four o'clock. General Thomas, the grand old hero, had dismounted from his horse and stood in the pouring rain watching the movement closely with his

field glass. Steadily forward moved the lines ; gradually they approached the crest of the hill. All this time Wilson was playing the devil's tattoo in their rear ; now they were up to the works ; only for a moment they hesitated and exchanged fire face to face with Shy's command, and then the line broke. Thomas quietly turned to Schofield, and said, "General, will you please advance your whole line?" The order was repeated to Cox, and the staff officers scattered to the different brigades. But the orders were not given to the troops ; they had been watching the movement, too, and had followed it without orders. From this point the whole of Hood's army crumbled right and left. Their back-bone had been broken two weeks before at Franklin. There was no fight left in them. Pell-mell they went over the Granny White Pike to the Franklin Pike, flying as if old What's-his-name was after them. Artillery stuck in the mud, cartridges, guns, and accoutrements of every description scattered over the ground, as though they never expected to have any use for them again ; but as if their only thoughts were to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the dreadful Yankees. Oh, it was a glorious picnic to rush them from one hill to another, shouting all the way. Little heed was taken of time and approaching darkness. One officer was so carried away with the enthusiasm that he became separated from the staff, and pushed over to the 4th Corps, who were in pursuit, and then on with the cavalry, so that he did not find his way back to headquarters until three o'clock the next morning, and there found the General and staff stretched out in the mud, each one having two fence rails for a bed, no fire, and a drenching rain to cool off the ardor of the previous day.



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